DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 023 CE 076 436

AUTHOR	Valentine, Tom, Ed.; Sandlin, Jenny, Ed.
TITLE	Helping Adult Students Find a Place in the World of Work.
INSTITUTION	Georgia Univ., Athens. Dept. of Adult Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Georgia State Dept. of Technical and Adult Education, Atlanta.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	10p.; For other "Beyond Basic Skills" issues, see CE 076 435-438. Published quarterly. Sponsored by the Georgia State Office of Adult Literacy.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.coe.uga.edu/adulted/staffdev/bbs.html.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
JOURNAL CIT	Beyond Basic Skills; v1 n2 Win 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Adult Programs; Attitude Change; *Career Exploration; Career Planning; *Classroom Techniques; *Education Work Relationship; Employment Opportunities; Family Work Relationship; Information Sources; *Integrated Curriculum; Learning Activities; *Literacy Education; Occupational Information; Problem Solving; Teacher Role; Work Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS	Georgia

ABSTRACT

This document, which was written for adult educators in Georgia, offers instructional plans and practical strategies for helping students in adult literacy, adult basic education, General Educational Development, and English-as-a-second-language programs explore the world of work. The document begins with a discussion of the two major ways adult educators can help their students succeed in the world of work: by helping students develop basic language and mathematics skills and by helping students identify and clarify their personal attitudes about work. The remainder of the document presents and explains three learning activities to help adult students accomplish the following: clarify their attitudes toward work; solve problems relating to work; and develop practical plans for obtaining long-term, meaningful employment through a two-part process entailing envisioning their dream job and learning about specific careers. The following items are included for each activity: overview and rationale; list of skills developed in the activity; materials needed; steps educators should take to prepare for and conduct the activity; discussion questions; and student handout. (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 461 023

Helping Adult Students Find a Place in the World of Work

Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin, Co-Editors

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Valentine

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

CE 076 436

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Beyond Basic Skills

Innovative Teaching Materials for Georgia's Teachers of Adults

Volume 1, Number 2 Winter 1997

Beyond Basic Skills **offers instructional plans and practical strategies designed for immediate use by teachers in Georgia's adult literacy, ABE, GED, and ESL programs. This issue focuses on EXPLORING THE WORLD OF WORK. We hope you'll find these activities useful.**

Tom Valentine
Jenny Sandlin
Co-Editors

Helping Adult Students Find a Place in the World of Work

There has always been a strong tie between adult education and work. Funding for ABE, GED, and ESL programs has always been justified, at least in part, by the notion that education can help undereducated adults to become more productive members of society.

The big question, of course, is just how much can educators really do to help our students find and keep meaningful work. In some areas of our state, educators are frustrated when trying to help their students to find work because of the scarcity of jobs.

Although adult educators cannot realistically be expected to solve the problem of regional job shortages, they can use their teaching to position their students for jobs that emerge over time - or even to seek employment in areas of the state that have more jobs. In our current political and economic climate, many adult students might be forced to move or commute long distances in order to replace the evaporating stipends they used to receive through public assistance.

There are two major ways that adult educators can help their students succeed in the world of work. The first is obvious: *Skill development*. We're quite accustomed to helping our students develop their basic language and math skills, particularly those types of skills addressed by GED-oriented workbooks. Many adult educators extend their teaching to include "job-finding" and "job-keeping" skills. Through the use of workbook exercises, real life materials, and creative simulations, they teach students how to fill out job applications, find job openings, succeed in interviews, and how to behave in the workplace.

But there is a second idea we should be focusing on in our classrooms: *Helping students identify and clarify their personal attitudes about work.* Few adult educators have made exploring attitudes about work a focus of curriculum, mostly because it requires a very different type of instruction from what we are used to. Many of the teaching methods we use are suitable for learning skills and acquiring information, but are not effective in helping students to examine and articulate their attitudes and values.

It's a truism in education that you can't change attitudes or motivate people simply by providing them with skills or information. Attitudes are stronger than facts, and skills have meaning only if someone uses them to accomplish something he or she wants to accomplish. Unless we can begin to move our adult students toward a genuine wanting of work - or at least a grim acceptance of its inescapable nature - and toward an increased sense of power in their own career development, we must expect to have a limited impact on our students' success in the workplace.

This issue consists of three activities designed to help your students clarify their attitudes toward work, solve problems relating to work, and to develop practical plans for obtaining long-term, meaningful employment.

Hopefully, after working through these activities, the students in your program will possess a richer understanding of the place of work in adult life and will be in a better position to take charge of their own career development.

Planning the Sessions

The activities described below are designed for groups of learners, and are equally relevant for employed and unemployed students. You might try teaching all three activities as a special "seminar" called "Exploring the World of Work." Alternately, the individual activities can stand alone and be integrated into normal classroom instruction. The first activity is designed to be relatively easy, both for the learner and in terms of the teaching skills required. The second activity is slightly more difficult, and the third should prove quite challenging for both learners and teachers. But important learning doesn't come cheap. Stretch yourself!

Activity #1: Developing a Philosophy of Work

Overview and Rationale

Most adult educators work hard to make instruction relevant to the lives of their students. Whenever possible, we base instruction on the immediate goals and life situations of our students, in hopes of increasing learning motivation. Although this is almost always the right thing to do, if we take it too far we can inadvertently trap our students into very small worlds.

Often, creative teachers will engage in activities that encourage learners to see the "big picture." Our students, like all adults, need and want to see the connection between themselves and other people who live in different parts of the world. They need to recognize the continuity of human experience across the centuries that has led all of us to live the lives we live.

There are many ways we can enrich the intellectual atmosphere of adult classrooms without expecting unrealistic academic ability on the part of our students. Adult educators have experimented with reading poetry and song lyrics, watching and discussing films, or exploring current events. Some teachers report that when adult students encounter "big ideas," they respond enthusiastically. (Remember how excited you were when you first encountered philosophy?) They are impressed by the ideas and feel a sense of power in their ability to analyze, discuss, and own them.

This activity will give your students a chance to discuss things that prominent people have said about work over the years. During the activity, learners will read and discuss six quotations dealing with fundamental philosophical issues related to work.

Skills Developed in This Activity

Critical reading, critical thinking, and critical discussion skills.

Materials Needed for this Activity

✓ A copy of the handout entitled "Activity #1: Developing Your Own Philosophy About Work," enclosed, for each learner.

✓ Activity #1 Discussion Questions for you (see box below).

How to Prepare for this Activity

✓ Read the passages contained on the handout and try to predict your learners' ability to read them.

✓ If you believe that you need to "preteach" selected vocabulary, identify those words and decide the best way to define them for your learners. (The fifth quote, by DuBois, is especially challenging, but worth the effort.)

✓ Review the discussion questions in the box below, and adapt them - or write new ones - based on your own worldview and what you know about your learners.

What to Do in the Session

1. Before distributing the handout, ask your students: "What is philosophy? Where does it come from? Does everyone have a philosophy of life?" You want the group to come to the conclusion that all philosophy doesn't reside in books. Philosophy is something that ordinary people use to make sense of life.
2. Now tell students that big ideas are often contained in short sentences. Write a few common sayings on the board. (For example: "A stitch in time saves nine.") Let students analyze the meaning of the sayings you wrote. Ask: "Do you have any favorite sayings?" Encourage them to think of folk sayings or favorite lines from songs. Write them on the board and let students discuss them.
3. Now say: "In today's session, we're going to look at some of the things that people have said about work. Some of the quotes are difficult to understand, but they all contain important ideas." Distribute the handout.
4. Work through the quotations one-by-one. Read the quotations aloud (to help less able readers) and teach any difficult words. Use the discussion questions in the box below to help your students explore the meaning and value of each quotation. Let them find the meanings themselves. This will require patience on your part, but don't let the silence embarrass you into providing your opinions. Encourage students to talk to each other and to react to one another's ideas by asking: "Do you agree with that? Does anyone see anything else in the words?"
5. Near the end of the session, ask each student to share her/his most important thought or idea about work. Write them on the board (or have students write them) all at once—without discussion. Then discuss them as a group.

Activity #1 Discussion Questions

Quote #1. What is Oprah Winfrey saying here? Is she right? In what ways? In what ways is she wrong? Does it help a person to believe what she says? Why or why not? *(Central theme: You've got to believe in yourself.)*

Quote #2. What is Horace saying here? Is it true? How does it make you feel? *(Central theme: Work is an inevitable part of life.)*

Quote #3. What is Frederick Douglass saying here? Do you agree? How does it make you feel? Can you think of ways in which this makes sense even to people who don't have children or whose father didn't work? *(Central theme: Everyone who is part of the human "family" must do her/his part.)*

Quote #4. What is Ogden Nash saying here? Is he right? Is it fair? What can you do about it? How can you get one of those sitting-down jobs? *(Central Theme: Not all jobs are equal, and this can seem unfair.)*

Quote #5. What is W.E.B. DuBois saying here? Do you agree? Why does he think it's important that the world need your work? Can life make a person's life like heaven? Why or why not? *(Central Theme: You will only be happy if you find work that you like doing and that you believe to be important.)*

Quote #6. What is Sojourner Truth saying here? Do you believe that men and women should have different types of jobs? Why or why not? *(Central Theme: Women can do any jobs that men can do.)*

Activity #2: Solving Problems that Interfere with Work

Overview and Rationale

In this activity, a group of students will work together to solve common problems that can interfere with work. Many times students are more willing to analyze and solve other people's problems than to focus on their own personal problems. However, it is not uncommon for people to introduce their experiences and problems into such discussions. Be sure to follow up on these self-revelations if they are introduced, but be careful not to put anyone in "the hot seat."

Skills Developed in This Activity

Problem-solving, critical reading, critical thinking, and critical discussion skills.

Materials Needed for this Activity

✓ A copy of the handout entitled "Activity #2: Solving Problems That Interfere With Work," enclosed, for each learner.

✓ A copy of the Activity #2 Discussion Questions for you, and, if you wish, for each learner (see box below).

How to Prepare for this Activity

✓ Review the stories on the handout and try to predict your learners' ability to read them.

✓ Decide if you need to pre-teach any vocabulary, and plan accordingly.

✓ Review the discussion questions below, and decide on any additional questions you might want to ask.

What to Do in the Session

1. Before distributing the handout, ask students, "Do you believe everyone who doesn't have a job is lazy?" Although some students might answer "yes," at least some will say "no." Ask those who answer "no,": "Then why don't they have a job?" This should lead to students suggestions about things that interfere with work. Write them on the board.
2. Distribute the handouts. If you have strong readers in your group, select one to read the first story; if not, read it aloud while students follow along.
3. Now say: "Let's see if we can solve Jeanette's problems." Work through the discussion questions one-by-one, allowing ample time for discussion and student interaction. Try to get everyone involved in the discussion. If possible, jot key ideas on the board and then summarize the group's ideas at the end of the discussion.
4. Repeat this process with the other stories.
5. After working through all the stories, ask the students if they can think of other common problems that can interfere with work. (Some might have been discussed in Step 1, above.) Lead a discussion exploring solutions to those problems.

Activity #2 Discussion Questions

Although there are five very different stories here, the major discussion questions are the same for each:

1. Do you think this person will eventually find a good job? Why or why not?

2. If you were an employer, what would you like best about this person? What is the biggest barrier to this person's success?

3. How can that barrier be overcome?

4. What is the very next thing that this person should do?

5. Have you ever known anyone who faced a similar problem? What happened to that person?

Activity #3: A Process for Career Exploration

Overview and Rationale

Think about the amount of energy that college-bound high school students devote to planning their careers. They spend hours thinking about what they "want to be" and how to get there. They meet with guidance counselors, take career interest inventories, and talk to friends and family members about the pros and cons of a variety of careers. This process of career exploration is important, despite the fact that many students ultimately change their career goals later in life. The process itself teaches three critically important lessons:

- If people want to get anywhere, they have to plan for the future.
- People have the right to do the type of work for which they are best suited.
- People have the power to shape their future.

Now think about how different things are for our adult students. Because of limited funding, few programs can afford full-time counselors. In many programs, teachers, administrators, and even clerical staff will take time to listen to students and to offer them their best advice, but other duties prevent us from devoting large amounts of time to career advisement. We focus our instruction not on future aspirations, but on past shortcomings: Our students spend their time trying to improve skills or earn diplomas that most people have acquired earlier in life.

Because our students are playing academic catch-up, and because many are struggling to make ends meet in their day-to-day lives, they rarely find the time, energy, or support to engage in realistic career exploration. Sometimes they'll talk about their dreams but, meanwhile, they're either taking whatever jobs come along or not working at all. Unfortunately, many are working below their potential, but they don't feel powerful enough to turn things around.

How can teachers make adult students feel powerful enough to take charge of their own careers? This activity is designed to help students envision new possibilities and begin the information-gathering and planning processes that are fundamental to career exploration.

The activity involves two parts. Part I consists of a structured writing activity during which your students will envision their "dream" jobs and write poems about them. Part II gives students a chance to do guided library research on careers and then participate in an open discussion about how best to achieve their career goals.

Part I: Envisioning Your Dream Job

This writing activity will start your students on the process of setting career goals, and require them to think about the characteristics and tasks that lead to success in the jobs they would most like to have. An example of the type of poem

they will write appears in Box 3, below.

Skills Developed in Part I

Creative thinking, creative writing, and oral reading. Computer word-processing if your program has computers available and you want your students to practice using them.

Materials Needed for Part I

✓ Paper and pen or pencil for each learner. Computers if available.

How to Prepare for Part I

✓ Construct your own poem, to be sure that you understand the process.

What to Do in the Sessions

1. Have your students close their eyes and imagine a job they'd really like to have. Say something like this: "Picture this. You've just spent ten years working hard or going to school to get the job you really want. Now you've finally made it! You've just arrived at work and you're ready to start the day. Picture what it's like to do that job. How are you dressed? What kinds of things do you do? What do other people think when they watch you work?"
2. Ask the students to open their eyes and prepare to write. Have them number the page from *(1)* to *(7)*, and write the name of their dream jobs (e.g., secretary, doctor, salesperson) next to number *(1)*. Have them share and discuss their answers.
3. Ask them to think of words that other people might use to describe them once they have their new jobs. Many students probably won't know the parts of speech (adjectives, verbs, etc.), so you'll need to talk about "describing words." Give examples ("helpful" or "hard-working"). Have them write two "describing words" next to numbers *(2)* and *(3)* on their paper. Have them share and discuss answers.
4. Ask them to think of three things that they would actually do in their job. Tell them that these should be "action words or phrases" and that they should end in "-ing." Give examples ("painting" or "counting money"). After they have thought of three words or phrases, have them write the words or phrases next to the numbers *(4)*, *(5)*, and *(6)*, and then share and discuss their answers.
5. Ask the students to think about what kind of learning they will need to do in order to get their dream jobs. Will they have to go to college? A technical school? Will they learn their skills on the job? Have them write where they will learn what they need to know next to number *(7)* on their paper, and then share and discuss their answers.
6. Now have them take a blank sheet of paper and prepare to write their own poem. Use the black board to model each line as follows inserting their names and numbered items:

Title: (Name)'s Dream Job
Line A: I will be
Line B: (2) and (3)
Line C: (4), (5), (6)
Line D: With skills I learned at (7)
Line E: I can do it all!
Line F: I'm an excellent (1).

7. Help your students prepare "nice" versions of their poems, either on the computer or on attractive paper.

Box 3: Student Poetry Sample

Betty's Dream Job
I Will Be
Patient and Intelligent
Teaching Kids, Grading Papers,
Making a Difference
With Skills Learned at College
I Can Do it All!
I'm an Excellent Teacher

Part II: Learning About Careers

In this part of the activity, students will move beyond the ideas they expressed in their poetry to conduct concrete research about jobs and careers. The purposes of this activity are to give students an opportunity to explore their local library and to engage students in individual research. If students have never been to the library before, this is also a perfect time for them to obtain library cards, and for more experienced library goers to help newer students become familiar with the library and its resources. After research has been conducted, students will gather again in class and discuss their findings with each other.

Skills Developed in Part II

Research skills, critical thinking, and critical discussion skills.

Materials Needed for Part II

✓ A copy of the handout "Activity #3: Learning About Careers" (enclosed), a note pad or paper, and pen or pencil for each learner in your group.

How to Prepare for Part II

✓ Read the handout, predict learners' ability to read them, and pre-teach any vocabulary.

✓ Visit the local library ahead of time and consult with the librarian about possible resources. The librarian will probably be pleased to help out, and may even agree to conduct a mini-lesson about library research skills.

What to do in the Sessions

1. You will first need to start a discussion about information gathering. Begin by asking learners how they think they could learn information about the jobs they wrote about in their poems. Some learners may mention friends and family, and others might mention the library. Talk to your students about what kinds of resources are available at the library.
2. Next go over the handout with your students. Explain to them that this is what they will use as a research guide when they go to the library to investigate their job choices.
3. The next step involves getting your students to the library. You can either do this as a group activity, or have students go by themselves at separate times. If you can plan it as a group activity, more learners are likely to attend. In addition, they could help each other with their research. Instruct students that they are to find out the answers to the questions on the handout.
4. The final session will engage students in sharing and discussing what they found at the library. Encourage them to share what they discovered, and to compare this information with what other learners found.

Activity #1: Developing Your Own Philosophy About Work

Work has been part of human life since prehistoric days. Many people throughout history have written down interesting ideas about work. By discussing these ideas and deciding whether or not you agree with them, you can develop your own philosophy about work.

1. Many people believe that a positive attitude is the key to success. Famous television personality Oprah Winfrey said this:
You only have to believe that you can succeed, believe that you can be whatever your heart desires, be willing to work for it, and you can have it.

2. Others have said that nothing in life is free. We only get the things we need and want by working for them. Two thousand years ago, in ancient Rome, a famous poet named Horace wrote these words:
Life gives nothing to a person without labor.

3. People have talked about how work is an important part of everyone's life. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave and civil rights activist said this in 1852:
You live and must die, and you must do your work. You have no right to enjoy a child's share in the labor of your fathers, unless your children are to be blest by your labors.

4. Some people have pointed out how unfair different jobs can be. Ogden Nash, an American who wrote humorous poetry in the 1930s and 1940s said:
People who work sitting down get paid more than people who work standing up.

5. Many people claim that the type of work you do can affect the quality of your life. A good job can bring meaning to life. A job you don't like can make you miserable. W.E.B. DuBois, a famous editor, historian, and civil rights activist, wrote this in 1958:
The return from your work must be the satisfaction which that work brings you and the world's need of that work. With this, life is heaven, or as near heaven as you can get. Without this - with work you despise, which bores you, and which the world does not need - this life is hell.

6. Some people say that men and women should do different kinds of work. Sojourner Truth, a former slave and women's activist said this in 1851:
I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much, too.

Activity #2: Solving Problems That Interfere With Work

1. Jeanette's Story: "No Time for Learning"

I'm a waitress now, but I could run this whole darn restaurant. The boss likes me a lot, but she says if I want to be an assistant manager, I'll need more schooling. I don't know how I'm supposed to do that. The tech school has a evening program in business management, but it takes a year to complete and I'm ready to be a manager right now. Besides, after working all day, I'm wiped out. I need some time for myself. What should I do?

2. Lamar's Story: "I Really Love This Town!"

My father was born in this house, and so was his father. My family's been in this town practically forever. Everybody knows us, and every time I walk down the street, I see lots of people I know. Last year, I got my GED—just like everybody said I should. And you know what? I haven't found a good job yet. Since the mill closed down, there's nothing but part-time work and temporary positions in this town. I'd work if I could, but there just aren't any jobs. What should I do?

3. Keshia's Story: "I Want To Start My Own Business"

A lot of people I know work for other people, but I've got a better idea. I want to go into business for myself. I'm real good at doing people's hair, and I want to open my own beauty parlor. That way, I could make my own hours and I wouldn't have to deal with a boss. I know I could make it if I just got going, but the bank won't give me a loan. They say I need more education and some practical experience. But that's not so. I believe in myself, and I know I could make a lot of money. What should I do?

4. Mary Beth's Story: "My Children Need Me"

The caseworker down at the welfare office says that my money's gonna run out real soon. She says I need to find a job and find it fast. How am I supposed to do that? I got two kids, and they need their mother around. When they're at school, I clean and cook and take a little time for myself. When they get home, they need someone to look out for them. I told the caseworker, just wait until they grow up. Then I'll get a job. She says that I got no choice, that I got to find a job. What should I do?

5. Robert's Story: "My Family and Friends Make It Hard To Get Ahead"

Sometimes I think my family and friends don't want me to get a good job. When I signed up for the nursing course at the tech school, my girlfriend kept after me, telling me men shouldn't do that kind of work. And get this. My mother agreed with her. I couldn't take it any more, so I quit that program. Then I was going to apply for a janitor job at the hospital, and my mother said, "What do you want to be around all those sick people for?" What should I do?

Activity #3: Learning About Careers

When you have an important decision to make, you want to have the very best information you can get. In deciding what type of career you want, you will probably want to talk to friends, family members, and teachers about the careers you are considering.

There is also another place to get top quality information about careers. It's your public library. Most public libraries have many books that describe different types of jobs. The librarian is usually happy to help you find the books you will need. Some libraries even have special computer programs that will help you find career information.

Go to your library to find out more information about the job you wrote about in your poem. Try to find answers to the following questions:

1. **What skills (some books call these "aptitudes") are needed for the job?**
2. **What kind of training does the job require? If you will have to go to school, how long will it take?**
3. **How much does the job pay?**

Write down this information to share with the group. Make photocopies of the pages that are most important.

If you have trouble finding information, ask your librarian to help you. Here are some of the places you might find the information:

✓ The **Georgia Career Information System** (GCIS) is a computer database that gives a great deal of information about jobs in Georgia. You can find information about what you can expect to do at work, how much you will make, and what schooling you will need.

✓ The **Career Information Center** (6th edition, Simon & Schuster Macmillan, NY, 1996) is a set of books containing information on a wide range of careers. You can discover information about jobs in administration, business, the hospitality industry, health, community services, and many others.

✓ The **Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance** (9th edition, Hopke, W. E., editor, J.G. Ferguson Publishing Company, Chicago, 1993) contains a wide range of information about many different careers and jobs.

✓ The **Dictionary of Occupational Titles** (4th edition, U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) also contains detailed information about careers and jobs in the U.S.

Something to Think About

Because our programs are skill-oriented, our students spend a lot of time trying to learn the "right way" of doing things, and teachers assume that they are supposed to have all the answers. In our classrooms, we've become accustomed to dealing with things that have right answers.

But not all important learning has "right answers." On many of the most important things in life - love, justice, morality, politics, child-rearing, and so on - all adults struggle throughout their lives to understand what matters and what doesn't. In their out-of-school lives, most teachers would be reluctant to insist that everyone believe and behave exactly as they do—even if they wished this were true. Sometimes we forget this in the right-and-wrong world of classroom instruction.

Adult students can learn a lot about the important things in life by "talking things through" and by bouncing ideas off of one another—even if the ideas they express seem outlandish to you. As you teach the activities contained in this issue, try not to assume the role of an expert answer-giver. Instead, become a question-asker, a problem-poser.

Like all adults, your students probably don't really like other people telling them what they ought to do—or what they ought to believe. This is especially true with respect to attitudes and beliefs about work. Lots of people have told them that they ought to get a job or a better job, but few people have ever asked them such questions as, "Do you believe everyone must work? Why or why not?" Until our students find their own answers to such questions, they'll never find the sense of power and responsibility they'll need to succeed in the world of work.

GED CLASSROOM: NO PHILOSOPHY ALLOWED!

Some teachers believe that activities like these have no place in a GED classroom. They believe that group activities are not as important as individualized, workbook-based instruction is a more efficient way to get students ready for the GED.

We disagree for three reasons. First, success on the GED requires exactly the kind of critical thinking and critical reading that are developed in these activities. Second, workbook-based instruction can be boring; group activities can increase program retention by building a sense of community - and fun - in your classroom. Third, if you take the long view, you'll realize that lifelong learning doesn't stop at the GED. In today's world, a high school diploma isn't as valuable as it was twenty years ago. If students are going to improve their lives, adult educators and students need to look beyond basic skills and the GED and begin thinking about applying new-found skills in their out-of-school lives and in further learning.

Special Thanks! to Tim Beard, Liz Black, Jan Craig, Ellen Kilgos, Art LaChance, Joyce Oetting, Chante Roberts, Elliott Sams, and Ann Van Slyke for their valuable and insightful input and suggestions.

Beyond Basic Skills is published quarterly under a grant from the Office of Adult Literacy of the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education. It is prepared, printed, and distributed by the Department of Adult Education at The University of Georgia. Tom Valentine and Jenny Sandlin are co-editors.

Subscriptions are free to anyone working in publicly-sponsored literacy programs in Georgia. A limited number of subscriptions are also available for other literacy teachers upon request.

We welcome teachers to copy this material for classroom use. Reproduction for any other use requires the written permission of the authors or the Office of Adult Literacy.

Beyond Basic Skills
Adult Literacy Staff Development Project
Adult Education Department
424 Tucker Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-4015

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 165
Athens, Georgia

BEST COPY AVAILABLE